

JUNIOR FIELD HOCKEY

LEAGUE RULES

Divisions: Grades 2-4 & 2-6

Revised February 2011/Approved February 2011

New Provisions are underlined, strikeouts are indicated, directors' feedback is highlighted

The Junior Field Hockey League is an introduction to field hockey and is intended to be an enjoyable learning experience for both participants and fans. The emphasis in this league is on teaching the basic skills of the game, the importance of sportsmanship, and teamwork. No league standings will be kept.

I. ELIGIBILITY AND ROSTERS

- A. Children participating in this league must be enrolled in the 2nd through 6th grades during the season the sport is played and cannot participate in any higher level hockey program. These rules apply to players in divisions 2-4 grades and 2-6 grades.
***If it is found that a player is currently playing a higher level, she/he will be immediately removed from the current game, become ineligible at the junior level for the rest of the year and all goals in the current game will be nullified.
- B. There will be no more than 10 players on a team, unless the league votes to allow an exception for a larger team. Team rosters (which include the name, grade, number and years of experience for players and the name and phone number of coaches) are to be distributed to all coaches and officials as instructed by the League Director, which shall be no later than 1 week prior to the first scheduled game.
- C. A roster of league referees (including name, phone number, email and address) will be distributed as part of the game schedule which is prepared by the league.
- D. When a municipality has only two teams; if either of these teams has less than 7 players, then 2 floaters may be designated for that small team (the names should appear on the roster at the beginning of the season). If a municipality has more than 2 teams, only one team may float. Only one player may float per game (to provide a substitute/ can not start either half) and cannot play more that half of each half. If

the floater is the 5th person, they can remain in the entire game. The floater may not be used if it creates a team with more players than the opponent has at that game

- E. Every child must play one half of each half unless benched for disciplinary reasons or in case of a strong player being benched in an unbalanced game (referees must be notified that a child is being benched)

II. THE FIELD—Diagram of field is shown in Attachment A

- A. The field size is defined by a 25 yard end line and 50 yard sideline.
- B. The field will also be marked by a line at mid field and 10 yards from each end line. A solid line semi circle shall be scribed with a radius of 9 yards from the center of the goal cage which is centered on the end line. A slash mark will be scribed 1 yard from the end of each side of the goal cage. A dashed semi circle with a radius of 2 yards shall be scribed from the 2 slash marks within the solid semi circle. Alleys will be scribed on the field, with slash marks running parallel to the sideline, ending at the 10 yard lines. The alleys shall be 18 feet wide.
- C. The goal cage shall measure 6 feet to 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ feet across the front, inside dimension. The front edge should be placed touching the outer edge of the end line.
- D. It is the responsibility of the home team to provide a safe and well cared for field of play.
- E. It is the responsibility of the home team to postpone any game due to inclement weather or less than safe field conditions.
- F. It is the responsibility of the home team to provide benches for both teams, and 3 chairs, a table and clock for the score keepers and the time keeper, and bathroom facilities (portable toilets, etc.).
- G. The score and time keepers must sit together at the mid field line on the players' side of the field. The time keeper should have a horn or whistle which will be sounded: at the conclusion of the half, at the end of the game, and when score keepers have a question about recording a foul or goal.
- H. Parents will sit on one side of the field while both teams, timekeeper, and scorers will sit on the opposite side of the field.
- I. Players and coaches will remain with their teams in the bench area throughout the game and half time unless given permission to leave this area by their coach.

- J. Coaches may walk the sideline area between the scorer's table and the 10 yard line on their bench's half of the field. They may not proceed beyond these limits.

III. UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

- A. Members of each team shall be dressed uniformly. Uniforms will consist of matching stirrups and shirts. A number must be clearly visible on the back of each shirt. It is recommended that all teams have different color uniforms. Hat and other non-uniform apparel that is judged unnecessary or unsafe may not be worn on the playing field.
- B. In case of similar team uniforms, the home team shall wear contrasting pinnies.
- C. Warm up pants/tights and sweatshirts should be worn under stirrups and uniform shirts.
- D. Non-clear mouth guards and shin guards must be worn at all times. Long hair must be tied back using soft hair bands.
- E. Jewelry, including earrings, may not be worn on the practice or playing fields. Studs in newly pierced ears must be taped.

IV. PLAYING THE GAME

- A. Games shall be played weekdays, Tuesday through Thursday, starting at 6:00PM. Weekend games shall be played on Sunday, starting at 2:00PM 3:00PM.
- B. The length of a game is 40 minutes, played in 20 minute halves. This may be extended to 25 minute halves by mutual consent of coaches and referees. Play is based on a running clock (non-stop), with the timer being stopped for recognized coach's and official's timeouts.
- C. One, 1 minute time out is allowed per team per half. A team does not need possession of the ball to call a time out. The time out, however will not begin until recognized by the referee at a point when the ball is out of play. Any time out not used is lost when the half expires.
- D. A 10 minute half time is allowed between halves. This may be shortened by mutual consent of coaches and referee.

- E. In the event of a tie score at the end of regular play, the game will end a tie. No overtime periods will be played to break a tie score.
- F. Five players from each team will play on a field at a time. Three of these players will play offense positions and two will play defensive positions. There is no goalie.
- G. The wing position on the coaches' side of the field shall be reserved for the youngest and least skilled players on the field. Coaches shall be mindful of the size and skill of players from both teams in this position and make all possible adjustments to insure the coaches' wing is a safe place for developing hockey skills and understanding. Coaches and referees are urged to speak together about the best way to use the coaches' wing throughout the game. More experienced and physically stronger players shall not be paired with younger or smaller players in the wing positions.
- H. Captains are called to the center of the field for the pre game coin toss. The home team calls the flip. The winner of the toss may choose the pass back or which goal to defend.
- I. Teams change goals for the second half with the team that did not have the pass back starting play the second half.
- J. The game begins with a pass back. Any player may play the pushed ball on a pass back except the player doing the pass back (this rule also applies to free hits and corners).
- K. Substitutions of players from the bench into the game are made when the ball is out of play, except that substitutions will not be allowed for players involved in a bully or penalty corner unless required by personal fouls or injury. The players will wait until signaled by the official, players have 10 seconds to get into positions. Refs will use good judgment when allowing substitution and avoid stopping an obvious advantage in a free hit for the other team.
- L. Defensive players may not cross the center line with their body(the stick may cross the line)
- M. Offensive players may not cross into their own circle with either their body or stick(in front of the goal they are defending).
- N. A goal is scored when the entire ball passes completely over the goal line
- O. All shots on goal must be taken from inside the circle, or on the circle line. If the ball is delivered in the direction of the goal from outside the circle, and is deflected into the goal by a defender's body or stick,

or goal post, no goal is scored. If the ball is knocked into the goal, from within the circle or on the circle line, by a defensive player's body or stick or goal post deflection, it is a legal goal.

P. Every player on a team must score before any player can score a second legal goal.

Q. No 6th grade player shall play Back Defense unless mutually agreed to by both head coaches. This rule does not prevent a Front Defensive player from **temporarily** covering Back Defense position should the Back Defensive player move out to cover an offensive player.

V. STARTING PLAY

A. The game will be started with a pass back in the center of the field.

B. The ball cannot cross the centerline into the opponent's side of the field.

C. All players must be on their own side of the field, and opposing players must be at least 5 yards from the opposing players until the ball is moved.

D. The ball must move from its original position before any other players can touch the ball

E. The player starting the pass back may cross the centerline.

VI. RESTARTING PLAY

A. Following simultaneous fouls, a pop up (the ball shoots up vertically), or when it is impossible for the official to determine fault for a foul or out of bounds call, play will be restarted with a bully on the spot.

B. No bully can be taken less than 10 yards from the end line and five yards from the side line.

C. All players must be at least 5 yards from the ball until it is put in play.

D. Neither bullying player may move his/her feet until the ball is put into play.

E. If a team is in possession of the ball when a time out is called, play will be restarted with a free hit by that team.

F. If an illegal second goal is scored, play will restart at midfield with a pass back by the defensive team.

VII. MOVING THE BALL

- A. Driving, flicking and scooping the ball is not allowed.
- B. Only the flat side of the stick may be used to advance the ball.
- C. A player need not be in the field of play in order to play the ball.
- D. Free pushes are awarded when a foul is called on the opposing team:
 - 1. The push is taken at the spot where the foul occurred.
 - 2. All opposing players must be a least 5 yards from the person taking the free push unless no advantage is gained
 - 3. The ball cannot lift on a free push.
 - 4. If a push in occurs in the defensive portion of the field and a wing's pass is not strong enough to clear the wing lane, the offensive center may cross into the wing lane to retrieve the pass.
- E. Push-ins are awarded when the opposing team hits the ball out of bounds. All opposing players must be at least 5 yards away from the push unless no advantage is gained. The push-in player's feet must start out of bounds.
- F. A player taking a free push or push-in (and the ball) must be stationary. Only one step is allowed into the field of play when taking this push. A slap shot or running start will result in surrender of the ball to the opposing team.
- G. The player taking the push cannot play the ball again until it has been touched by another player.
- H. Fouls and out of bounds violations committed by the offense (attacker) inside the 10 yard line will be judged accordingly.
 - 1. If the violation occurs inside the circle, a free push will be awarded to the defense at a location of their choosing on the 10 yard line.
 - 2. If the violation occurs outside the circle, a free push will be awarded to the defense on the 10 yard line directly forward of the point of infraction
- I. Fouls and out of bounds violation committed by the defense that occur inside the 10 yard line will be judged accordingly.
 - 1. If the violation occurs outside the circle, a free push will be awarded to the offense at

- the point of the infraction.
2. If the violation occurs inside the circle it will result in a corner shot awarded to the offense.
 3. During a corner shot, both defensive players will position themselves behind the end line, one on either side of the goal, and between the goal cage and slash mark, until the ball is put into play. The defending offense must be positioned behind the 10 yard line. The offensive players will be positioned on the outside edge of the circle. The penalty corner push may be taken by either wing. The ball must be stopped by the receiving player.

VIII. FOULS (personal fouls are **bolded**)

- A. **STICKS**: raising the head of the stick above the waist of the smallest player in the area of the ball.
- B. **DANGEROUS HITTING**: a ball which lifts above the top of the shin guard of the smallest player in the area of the ball, or a ball which lifts and is judged by the referee to be intimidating. It is generally assumed by the referee that the tackling player bears responsibility for trapping a ball pushed by the advancing player. The stick must be held in a vertical position when trapping the ball.
- C. **HITTING THE BALL WITHOUT STOPPING IT**: The ball must be controlled before being pushed. The ball may rebound off a motionless stick.
- D. **DANGEROUS PLAY**: An activity, in the judgment of the referee that is considered dangerous to an individual player, teammate, or opponent.
- E. **DRIVING THE BALL**: No back swing, only pushes allowed.
- F. **INTENTIONAL, FLAGRANT FOULING/MISCONDUCT/UNSPORTMAN LIKE CONDUCT**: Any behavior, in the judgment of the referee, that is considered misconduct, such as abusive language, throwing sticks or equipment, pushing, shoving, striking an opponent or team mate, charging, unsportsmanlike conduct, use of restricted substances at the playing area etc. In the event this foul is called, a warning will be issued by the referee and the player will be charged with the foul. The second offense will cause automatic ejection from the game. The second offense for a coach will cause automatic forfeiture of the game. In the instance of a fan committing the second offense, he/she will be asked to leave the field area by either the referee or coach. Play will be suspended until there is

compliance. The game will be forfeited after a reasonable halt to the game if the offender refuses to comply. Any foul or conduct, in the judgment of the referee, that appears to have been committed purposefully and repeatedly, and is committed following direction and warning from the referee to cease that behavior, shall be deemed to be a foul. In the event that this foul is charged, a penalty corner shall be taken by the opposing team. The purpose of this section is to eliminate and discourage repetitive fouling.

- G. **LOW BLOCK TACKLING:** Low blocks are very dangerous. A player's hands cannot both touch the ground and the high stick hand must be above the player's knee.
- H. **HACKING:** When a player hits, holds, hacks, hooks, slashes, or strikes the opponent or opponent's stick.
- I. **ADVANCING:** Gaining control of the ball or stopping the ball using any part of the body.
- J. **OBSTRUCTION:** Any time a player using their body or stick to block the opponent from the ball. This includes hitting or passing the ball between his/her own feet.
- K. **BUNCHING:** Called when more than one player from the same team is within 3 yards of the ball. Bunching will not be called inside the circle or when players are backing away from a crowded play.
- L. **WRONG SIDE OF STICK:** Only the flat side of the stick may be used to advance the ball. The foot or leg may not be used to support or move the stick.
- M. **DELAY OF GAME:** When substitutions or free hits take longer than 10 seconds or a team does not take the field at the direction of the referee. This violation results in the lost possession of the ball or a penalty corner.
- N. **POSTITIONING FOULS:** Called when a player or players are consistently playing out of position (center running on the alley line, crossing into the wing position, defense acting as a goalie)
- O. **ILLEGAL SECOND GOAL-** The entire team must each score before a teammate can score a second legal goal. Ball will be brought back to the center of the field and the game restarted by defending team.
- P. **GOAL TENDING:** The Front or Back Defensive players cannot be in or on the dotted semi circle until an offensive player has moved the ball past the midfield line. This foul will result in a free push in for the offense at the place in the field when the position foul occurred. The Back and Front and Back Defensive players must be stationed behind the 10 yard line, but out of the solid semi circle, until the offensive

player has moved the ball. The defensive Center and Wings must be 5 yards from their offensive counter parts.

IX. PERSONAL FOULS AND DISCIPLINE

- A. Three personal fouls committed by an individual player require the player to be removed for a period of 5 minutes of their play time.
- B. After committing five personal fouls in one game, a player is removed from play for the duration of the game.
- C. If a team is unable to field a team of 5 players because of personal fouls, the game will be lost by forfeit. With the agreement of both coaches and the referee play may continue without the benefit of substitution. Any additional fouls committed by a "fouled out" player will award a penalty corner to the opposing team. During this period, no goals will be recorded as the game is already decided by forfeit.
- D. When a foul is called by the referee, the call will state whether it is a personal foul, and if so the team color and the player number. The player is required to identify themselves to the scorer by raising their hand.
- E. A coach has the right to bench a player for disciplinary reasons.
- F. If a team moves ahead of their opponent by a score of 3 goals, the referee shall blow the whistle and call a 30 second official's timeout for the dominate coach to make adjustments. The referee will direct that coach to power down with the strategies presented in Attachment B. In the event that a 4 goal or greater lead occurs, the referee will require the coach to make additional changes to power down the dominate team, in addition a penalty corner will be assessed against the offensive team at their goal. All goals will be counted, with the exception of illegal second or subsequent goals.

X. REFEREES, COACHES, SCORERS, TIMERS

- A. The referee's ability to fairly judge the play of the game depends on the cooperation of the players, coaches, and their fans. The referee will occasionally miss calls due to the action of the field or obstructed view. Some personal fouls are awarded at the discretion of the referee. The player shall not

question the call, but allow the coach to question the rulings of the referee. However, the referee's call is to be the final judgment. Coaches, players, and fans are to refrain from harassing the officials, opposing coaches, and players.

- B. Each municipality shall provide at least one referee per grade division and one for every two teams entered into the league.
- C. The referee will check all players prior to the beginning of each half to assure proper equipment and uniforms are worn.
- D. Each team shall pay \$20.00 each for officials. In the event that only one referee is present, each team shall pay \$15.00.
- E. Each team must provide a scorer and the home team must provide a timekeeper for each game. These people become the game officials and must stay at the score table for the entire game. Fouls, goals, and time outs are recorded only at the direction of the referee.
- F. It is anticipated that the members of the coaching staff will conduct themselves in accordance with a coaches Code of Ethics. All participants in the league are subject to the Grievance Procedure and must comply with any recommended discipline.
- G. It is recommended that coaches be certified by the National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA) or Rutgers SAFETY. Coaches are expected to behave in a sportsman like manner. They are expected to set an example for both the children and the parents. Yelling at referees and cursing warrant misconduct fouls.
- H. The coaching staff will use reasonable judgment in the deployment of strong players against weaker opponents, and in the deployment of players at those times when the score would indicate domination of the game such as a lead of 4 or more goals or the scoring of 3 or more unanswered goals.
- I. Once a lead of 3 or more goals has been established, required playing time for strong players is suspended.

XI. SCOREKEEPER TASKS:

- A. Record the name and number of players from both teams in the score book.
- B. Record, at the direction of the referee, personal fouls, goals, and time outs.
- C. Sound the whistle or horn to alert the referee that a player has to leave the game due to personal fouls (3 personal fouls require a player to leave the game for 5 minutes. 5 personal fouls the player must leave for the duration of the game).
- D. Record the time at which a "fouled out player" may return to the game.
- E. Frequently compare the information in your scorebook with your opponent's book to assure that both books agree. When differences are discovered, inform the referee.
- F. Signal the official when substitution is requested.

XII. TIMEKEEPER TASKS

- A. Start and stop the clock only at the direction of the referee. The clock is only stopped for time outs called by the teams or official.
- B. Inform coaches when players may return to the game following a required absence from personal foul.
- C. Alert the referee when one minute remains in the half or game.
- D. Count down the final 10 seconds of the half or game and sound the horn or whistle as time expires on the clock.

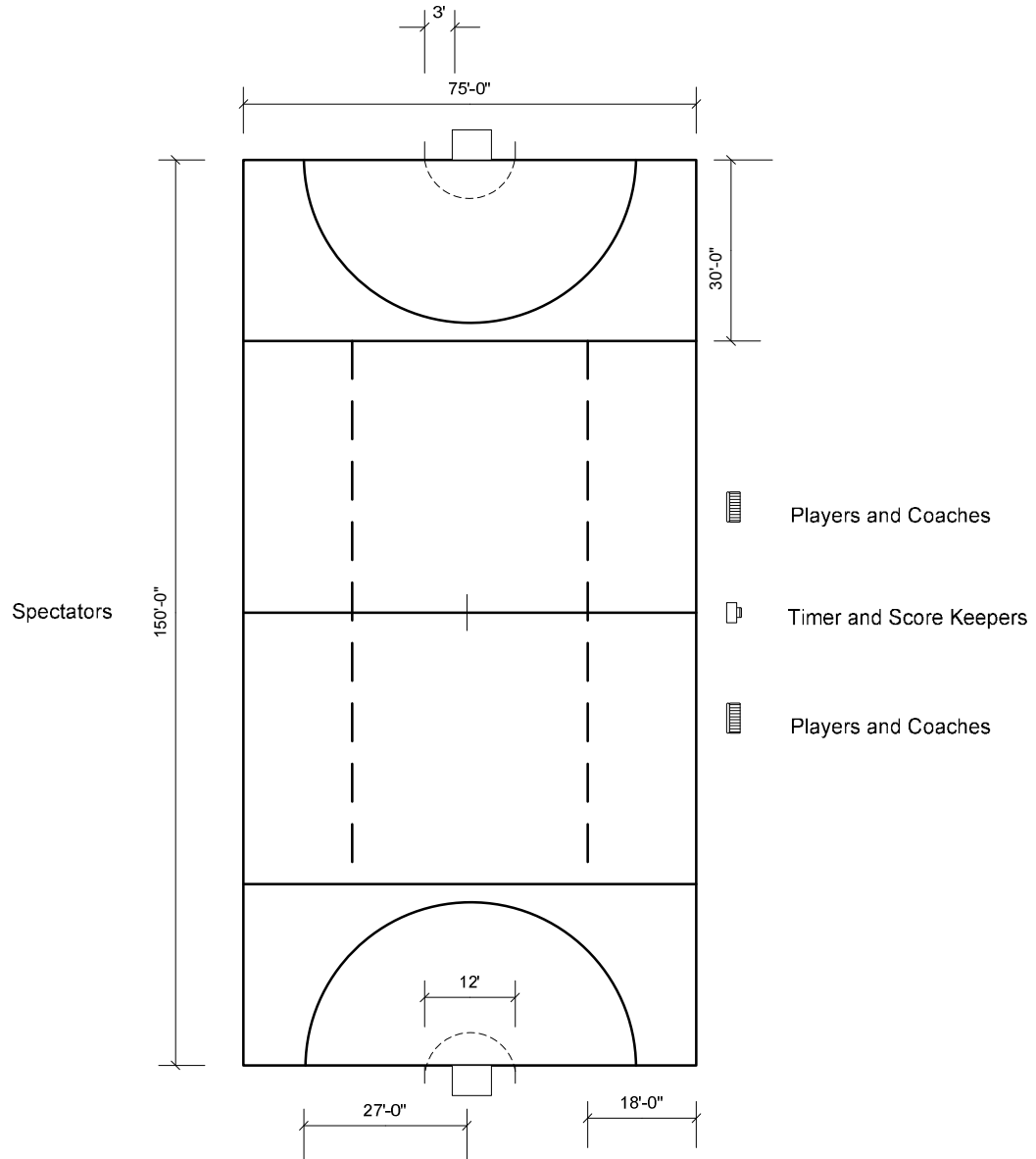
XIII. OFFICIALS

- A. During the game, the official shall have discretionary power for making decisions on matters which are not specifically covered by the rules. In the event game or field conditions are considered hazardous to the safety or welfare of players, the official may terminate the game.
- B. If an advantage would be gained by the offending team because of enforcing a rule, the official shall refrain from awarding the penalty, however, officials will not hold the whistle for personal fouls committed in open field play. If the defense commits a personal foul during the scoring of a goal, the

goal will still be awarded but a personal foul will be charged against the offender play is restarted with a pass back.

- C. Decisions based on the judgment of an official are final and not subject to review.
- D. To review a misapplication of the rules by an official, the coach immediately requests an official's time out at the scorer's table.
- E. Prior to the game, the official shall:
 - 1. Inspect goal, nets and field markings
 - 2. Give attention to the proper placement of team benches, official's table, and spectator seating.
 - 3. Review field conditions (any uncorrectable conditions shall be reported to both coaches prior to the start of the game)
 - 4. Meet with the team captains, conduct the coin toss for choice of goal or possession
 - 5. Line up players in front of the team bench and conduct an inspection of players and equipment
 - 6. Confer with timers to review duties, responsibilities and make certain clocks are in working order.

Attachment A - Field Diagram



Attachment B - Powering Down Strategies

The team with a 3 goal or greater lead will be required by the referee to power down their team to facilitate giving the opposing team an increased chance of scoring a goal.

3 Goal Lead Strategies

1. 3 passes within the circle before a shot on goal is attempted
2. Center cannot cross into the circle
3. Center cannot cross 10 yard line
4. Most experienced Center is removed from game
5. Starting pass back occurs between mid field and 10 yard lines
6. One or both Wings confined to Wing Lanes
7. Back Defense or Front Defense players are confined to the end line and 10 yard line

4 Goal or Greater Lead Strategies

1. 4 or more passes within the circle before a shot on goal is attempted, increases as number of dominate goals increases
2. Center cannot cross mid field line
3. Experienced players cannot play Back Defense or Front Defense positions
4. Back Defense or Front Defense players cannot play in the Wing lanes
5. Reduce players to 4
6. Back Defense and Front Defense players are confined to the end line and 10 yard line
7. 5th or 6th grade players cannot play Back Defense while a 4 or more goal lead exists. It is an unfair advantage to shut down scoring opportunities by having the strongest or most dominant player blocking a small goal area.